1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

[P.184-C]

society is to take place, any raiding of the plantations of village women that is proposed is made known to the villagers in advance, and meat is offered in exchange.

Schebesta (1948, 501 ff.) gives a detailed description of a joint village-Mbuti *toré* ceremony. At about 10 o'clock at night, announced by blasts on the trumpet, a procession of some 20 men, villagers, and Mbuti, entered the village, dancing wildly. The Pygmies (as always) were the musicians and blew into three sonorous clay pots of different sizes, the largest being called "mother" and the others "children." The largest pot contained just enough water to cover the bottom, into which a pipe was thrust. Some sang; others made weird noises by holding their noses.[1] In the morning the procession left for the Pygmy camp, two hours away. Before they passed through small village hamlets, someone was sent ahead to warn the inhabitants who had not heard the approaching blasts of the long wooden horn; women and children fled to the shelter of their huts as the procession went by. In one village a woman who remained in sight was threatened and made to give a chicken in payment for her release. On nearing the Pygmy camp, the trumpet was hidden in the brush, and the musicians took another path. The main procession entered the camp, where there were only a few old men and their wives.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

to status in the band and the fact that young men, as yet unmarried, who have displayed particular prowess as hunters may take a prominent part in *molimo* activities. In the absence of any detailed information on formal initiation into the *molimo*, we can at least say with some certainty, from the available material, that among the net hunters membership is associated primarily with hunting skill.

With regard to the proceedings of the association, all reports from this district indicate that the *molimo* is held only on occasions of the greatest importance to the community: various crises, and particularly death. A fuller account is given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1960b, 307–340); a summary is given here.

The word *molimo* is used to denote the association, its proceedings, and a musical instrument. Only one instrument is reported by the Putnams as being used—the *molimo* trumpet. But Anne Putnam, in her notes, mentions having heard the trumpet one night and thinking that it sounded very different from the one she had heard some months previously. It is possi-

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ble then that there may be different types of instrument, but evidently not used in conjunction. Anne Putnam further mentions having heard sounds that she took to be animal sounds but that may in fact have been singing pots as described by Schebesta (1952, 279). The only instrument that she or her husband mentions, however, is the trumpet, and no description of it is given. 534

This instrument is an essential part of the proceedings; its use marks the difference between two grades of *molimo* meeting. A meeting in which the trumpet is not used does not carry the significance that one with the trumpet does. There is no information as to exactly when it is used and when not, but it is recorded that the trumpet is heard during meetings following death, during serious illness, or during some crisis affecting the welfare of the band as a whole. It is frequently associated with song, accompanied by split-stick clappers, *banja* (Fig. 52) that are apparently peculiar to the *molimo*. 534 575 796 [533]

A third grade of meeting is that from which women and children are not excluded, during 533 575 796

[P. 225-C]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

FIG. 52. Split clappers, *banja*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

533 which *molimo* songs may or may not be sung.
575 Such a meeting may be said to be religious, in
796 that it is known by all that the songs effect
[796] some kind of communion with the God of the Forest, but they are not held with any specific purpose. After an evening meal the men sit together around the main fire, talking and smoking. The subject of conversation may take a serious turn, or there may simply be a long silence during which one or another of the men starts singing. In either case someone quite spontaneously starts singing a *molimo* song, and the others join in. At such times the women and children remain sitting, as is their habit, around their individual fires outside their huts; they

[NET HUNTERS]

533 575 796 are not expected to retire to their huts. Only if the singing develops a certain turn do they retreat. They know that certain songs have more significance than others, and, on hearing these, they retire. It is unusual, however, for an ordinary meeting of the men to develop to this extent.

575 533 534 796 Usually the trumpet is heard at about the time the band normally retires for the night. The women in any case have been aware of whatever crisis is the occasion for the meeting and are prepared for it. On hearing the trumpet, they take their children and shut themselves in their huts. None will come out, even to cross the clearing. The men sit close together around one of the fires. As they sing, the *molimo* trumpet echoes their song, sometimes coming close, sometimes going far away into the forest. The *molimo* may come right into the camp itself and install itself, unseen, close to where the men are [535] sitting. At a given point the men may suddenly start dancing through the fire, scattering the ashes and cinders to all sides. Shortly afterwards the participants go to bed. The singing may last only two or three hours, or may con-

[P. 226-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 226-C]

tinue until first light, according to the Putnam material. Once a meeting is begun, it may continue nightly for as long as a month. It is obligatory for all members to attend, and those who are away visiting return to take part. Visitors in the camp also take part if they qualify as hunters. Men, and more particularly youths, sometimes improvise headdresses of cane and feathers (Fig. 50), similar to those worn by village men and women during initiation festivities. Putnam says that food may be prepared for the men by a woman (it is not known who), but that she never appears and has no other function in the proceedings.

In my own experience the words of the songs that are sung by the *molimo* are not supplicatory but are mainly repetitions of one or other of the names of the God of the Forest, or affirmations of his goodness and omnipotence. The songs are, nonetheless, effective means, as far as the Mbuti are concerned, of securing an end to the crisis. The purpose of these meetings is undoubtedly to restore the normality to a community which in some way or another has deviated.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

There is, however, some evidence that indicates another usage of the *molimo* society, more in accord with Schebesta's interpretation of its social function. Anne Putnam reports having once been in a hunting camp when there was some commotion, fairly early in the evening, and the women shouted that the *molimo* was coming. All the women and children promptly fled to their huts and shut themselves in, with much loud complaining. Shortly afterward, the trumpet was heard in the distance and then, closer at hand, the sound of a chicken being killed, which evidently called forth a renewed burst of anger from the women. The men in the camp started singing, and the women became quiet. The singing lasted until nearly dawn. In the morning it was explained to Mrs. Putnam that the *molimo* had taken a chicken and would not pay. "But that is the way of the *molimo*," explained her male informant.

That evening a basket appeared in the camp, hung up in a prominent place, filled with plantains—a gift for the *molimo*. Members were able to help themselves from the basket, and the women were expected to keep it filled. After all the women had gone to bed, the men started singing, although they had said that they were not going to sing that night. As the singing

[P. 226-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[p. 227-A]

reached a climax (drums were being used, unusual for a religious meeting of the *molimo*), the trumpet arrived. Anne Putnam heard one of the hunters say, "We shall give the *molimo* a present tonight." Another said that there was nothing to give. Then one of the more important but younger hunters said, "We'll give it water." At this point Anne Putnam looked out and saw water being thrown over a figure that seemed to be white and that was playing the trumpet. The figure did not flinch and continued playing, while the hunter who suggested throwing the water laughed. Shortly afterward the trumpet left, and the men sang without the drums before going to bed.

During this same meeting of the *molimo*, the basket was kept filled with food for the men of the association. The singing went on each night, sometimes with drums, sometimes without. On some occasions the singing, particularly when there were no drums, appears to have been serious. At other times the meeting seems to have been more in the nature of a joke, as in the case of the water throwing, and on another occasion when the *molimo* kept moving about in the bush

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

and refused to come to the camp. Some of the men tried to find it, but, as they went after it, it stayed silent for a while, then suddenly was heard on the other side of the camp.

Anne Putnam gives one other instance of this kind of meeting. While the evening meal was being eaten, the trumpet was heard and all the women had to shut themselves up. The trumpet approached the camp, and the men ran out to greet it, shouting and beating the drums. The trumpet came right into the clearing. Mrs. Putnam heard much shouting, drumming, hunting cries, and swishing of branches. The trumpet made a quick tour of the circle of huts and was then heard to disappear into the distance. The women were called out. The men were busy dancing. The women cooked a large meal, and the men all drank salt water so that they would sing well. They sang until about midnight. The trumpet was heard again for a short time early in the morning, in the distance.

The occasion for this *molimo* meeting, which lasted about a month, was poor hunting. However, an old woman died during the month. Anne Putnam was told that if the *molimo* had not already been meeting, they would have had to call it out for this occasion. They also explained that the woman's death was the reason

[P. 227-B]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P.227-C]

for the particularly long and intense singing at that time.

I myself witnessed only one such meeting of the *molimo*,[1] the occasion for which was not clear and which took place down near the village. One villager took part. The trumpet and the performer, covered with a cloth, were carried in from the forest on a crude litter and disappeared behind one of the huts. As the playing and singing proceeded, the villager and one or two Mbuti danced around the camp, tearing leaves off the roofs of huts and placing them against the door of the hut behind which the trumpet was playing. There was much laughter, but everyone spoke in low tones. Finally, the player and trumpet were carried away as they arrived, and everyone went to bed.

The other meetings of the *molimo* that I have witnessed were of the more serious kind, following the general disruption in the district among villagers and Mbuti alike when Patrick Putnam died. At these meetings no drums were used, even though they were sometimes available. But even at such meetings there was generally a period, early in the night, during which the men started singing a *molimo* song that mocked the womenfolk, accompanied by a mildly obscene dance around the fire, with much laugh-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

ter. During this time the food was being cooked, and the women were still chattering, though shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coincidence of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meeting, described by Anne Putnam. It is the custom of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do the boys of the initiation during the *nkumbi*. When the women once found themselves rivaled by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo*, they competed but were sung down and finally gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* trumpet died into the distance, however, the women started up again. When it was a case of death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women offered no competition.

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the women, and all the men had to run away every time they saw it. But then the men caught the

[1] Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.

[P 227–D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 246-C]

Another very striking difference between the archers and the net hunters concerns the initiation of boys. As this is treated more fully below (p. 252), we only indicate here the fact of the total absence of any *karé* brotherhood between Pygmy and villager initiates among the net hunters. Schebesta, on the other hand, places great importance on this pact for his archers, probably because of his insistence (1952, 281) on the fact that the *nkumbi* initiation is an initiation into the religious association of *toré* for both Mbuti and villagers. This is denied by Costermans (1938) for the archers and is contradicted by my own experience among the net hunters. In any case, if there is a difference between the two groups over the significance of *nkumbi* initiation (and it may well be only a difference of interpretation rather than of fact), it does not seem directly related to any difference in hunting technique.

Similarly, with marriage, separation, death, funerals, childbirth, and other occasions with ritual connections, such difference as exists in the two accounts seems to be associated more directly with prevailing differences in villager custom rather than with any inherent differences in the Mbuti communities. This, and the nature and function of the closed associations, are more properly the subject of discussion of the Mbuti-villager relationship rather than the difference between net hunters and archers, which is our main concern here.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

These Mbuti, however, just as much as others, *appear* to have adopted villager religious beliefs and practices. This could be taken as symptomatic of a much closer relationship involving a shared system of values. We cannot help noticing, further, that by retaining a monopoly of ritual specialists the villagers effectively seem to assert their superiority over the Mbuti. When birth or death takes place among the Mbuti while they are in the vicinity of the village, the local villagers take a prominent part in the appropriate festivities, appropriate according to their custom, that is. Marriage between Pygmies, while not always subject to ceremonial "ratification" in the village, is usually performed twice: once according to the simple Mbuti custom of arranging and effecting an exchange of brides with the necessary courtesies of prestation and feasting but with no other ceremonial; and once according to the

[P.251-D]

The primary purpose of the *molimo* for the Pygmies is to maintain and to restore normality in the forest. (We must ignore its possible social function at the moment because of insufficient information.) It fulfills its purpose through song and by the use of the *molimo* horn. The association may meet informally any evening as the men sit around the main campfire. They may sing *molimo* songs as well as hunting songs, but the horn will not be heard. Women and children are not excluded from the group, though, as is their normal habit, they usually keep to their own individual firesides. The association meets formally following any crisis such as death, serious illness, or exceptionally poor hunting. Women and children are then rigidly excluded, and the *molimo* horn is used. These formal occasions compel the attendance of all members. Adult members of the hunting band who are away come back; adult male visitors to the camp take part.

There is no formal body of magical belief and practice among the net hunters, nor, according to Schebesta (1952, 337), among the archers.

[P. 256-D]

[P. 257-A]

789 For the net hunters, the *molimo* is their only
575 means of dealing with the unknown, with situa-
796 tions for which they have no practical, immedi-
ately effective remedy. Individuals may and do indulge in the spontaneous practice of sympathetic magic, but this is informal and unsystematized. The *molimo* (and the *elima* to a lesser extent) may be considered "magical" in that the meeting of the association in proper circumstances is believed to restore normality to a situation that has in some way deviated.

562 The "proper circumstances" to which I refer
858 seem to be the non-participation of women and
885 children, the attendance of all adult male mem-
533 bers of the band, the use of special songs and the *molimo* horn, persistence in nocturnal meetings of the association, and constant reiteration of the songs until normality is restored. As far

784 as is known, although certainty is lacking, the meeting of the association, which may last for a month, is not accompanied by any taboos on hunting or gathering, eating, or sexual activity.

562 Some doubt exists also as to the position of women with regard to the *molimo*.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

796 796 778 782 575 [829] If this is magic, it is totally different from the kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skeptical amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very different attitude to the forest from that of the villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*, from the meetings I have attended and the conversations I have overheard, is that it is an association of hunters that has the power of making itself heard by the God of the Forest. This God is referred to by many different names, even within the same band, and, as frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The Forest," also, though less often, as "Father" and "Grandfather." The association must fulfill the conditions listed above in order to make itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction with song is the focal point of the meetings. [533] [534] [562] [858] Women and children are presumably excluded, because hunting, the most important of all activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as such, is primarily the province of men, and the God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.[1] The dominant note of the meetings is unanimity and insistence. All hunters must attend. They sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

[1] It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the *molimo* among net hunters, at least.

[P 257-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 257-C]

physical disposition they are emphasizing their unity. Their means of communication are special songs, as mentioned in the survey, sacred to the *molimo*. These songs are not phrased in terms of explicit supplication. They merely call on the God of the Forest by constant repetition of his name (frequently changing from one name to another, it seems for the sake of variety and euphony), and an occasional recitation of his qualities as the source of all good in the Mbuti life is given. This song is echoed by the *molimo* horn, which is far off in the forest, though it may, in the course of the meeting, visit the camp. The song is picked up by the lone performer who follows it, singing it into the horn, passing it on still farther into the forest, finally letting it die away into the distance.

In this way the Mbuti make sure that their song is heard. Sung in this way, the song itself rouses their God from an apparent state of sleep or detachment, bringing him to a consciousness of the plight of his children. This, for the Mbuti, is sufficient. There is no attempt to ask for favors. The God of the Forest is the source of all that is good and bad, so that, as long as he is conscious of what is happening, the Mbuti are content. But they say that sometimes he sleeps, and when he is asleep things come to pass that might have been prevented had he been awake. The *molimo* makes sure he is awake.

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With the *elima* it is similar. All adult women are members, and participation is compulsory in one's own camp or when visiting another. Communication with the forest God is again established by means of songs, special and sacred to the *elima*. However, the men take part. The *elima* meets on occasions of major concern to womenfolk—birth, arrival at the age of puberty, marriage, and death. Thus at birth and death, both the *elima* and the *molimo* are concerned. (As mentioned, however, the occasion of birth is little marked by ritual of any kind.) Both associations meet in the forest camp but out of sight of each other. The *elima* meets in the large *elima* hut or in a cluster of neighboring huts. Young children may be present. The exception, when the men take part in the meeting of the *elima*, is during the initiation of a girl.

In the survey we give an account of *elima* initiation (p. 216). If the *nkumbi* is not the initiation into the *molimo*, we must look elsewhere for this. When a boy kills his first "real animal," he is immediately acclaimed as a hunter, and

[P. 257-D]

The function of these associations is to regulate the relationship of these Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the normality of that relationship and to restore it when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of formal meetings of the men's association. This god is the source of good and bad, and it is therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village association with similar names and from whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi* initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is part of the mutual attempt of two peoples forced together by historical reasons and present territorial juxtaposition to regularize their relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade is another such expression of their relationship; it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two sets of values (those of the villagers and those of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his own religious association nor accord him any status in his own society. It enables him to move as an adult in villager society and gives the two peoples some common ground involving a superficially subordinate position for the Mbuti.

1, [Molimo and Elima associations --Analyst]

[p. 258-C]

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PLATE 38 7/1

GIRLS' HOOP DANCE, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

Dance, together with song, forms the major outlet of artistic expression for the Mbuti. The line between sacred and secular is almost non-existent. The hoop dance is used by girls and women to celebrate the *elima*, or puberty, of one of their number, but it may be seen also as an idle moment in almost any day. Words of accompanying songs are nearly invariably in praise of the forest.

1, /Plate 38 appears on page 309--Analyst/
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[P.308]

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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[P309] /Plate 38/
/Caption appears on p.308/

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

discussion. The discussion is not entirely haphazard, but once again the structural factor is elusive.

When first we look at the religious life of the Mbuti we feel the pulse beating clearly. The *elima* and the *molimo* are outstandingly evident as institutions connected with crisis, but the moment we try to analyze their function the beat becomes less distinct. Here the picture is again confused by the fact that the villagers have similar names for ceremonies of their own that are alike enough to lead to the assumption that the Mbuti adopted these institutions into their own disorganized framework. Then the pulse stops altogether.

I suggested earlier (Turnbull, 1956) that part of the answer lay in a vital opposition between the two worlds of the Mbuti, the forest and the village. Recognizing that opposition is no less a relationship than any other form of relationship, we can at least theoretically separate the two worlds temporarily, if they are truly in opposition, and study them apart. Using this device we are free to look at the Mbuti in the village context almost as though this were their sole existence, and discern there what system we can. We are also free to examine the same people in the forest context, living in small nomadic hunting bands, virtually independent of the village world. But by looking at the village world first, when we turn to the forest world we shall be able to follow the Mbuti not only as they move from one hunting camp to another, but also when they abandon the forest for a brief spell in the village, seized by a whim, by the desire for relaxation, or by their taste for village foods, wine and tobacco. In this way we shall arrive at a better understanding of both worlds of the Mbuti, and of the actual relationship between them. We shall also, in the process, test our hypothesis of opposition, and, if it be proven, discover the elusive principle that binds together the otherwise apparently lawless, leaderless, un-kin-conscious forest society.

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2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

[P.63]

CHAPTER 6

Village Religion

NKUMBI

Both villagers and Mbuti have notions concerning spirits and spiritual intervention, and associated religious systems. Once again, however, even where the facts coincide, the systems do not. One of the major differences is the lack of ritual ceremony among the Mbuti and the importance of it among the villagers. Thus, though manhood is every bit as important to the Mbuti as to the villagers, there is no formal Mbuti initiation ritual. And although marriage is considered just as sacred, and is recognized by the Mbuti as having profound social implications, it takes place in the forest in an apparently utterly casual manner without any ceremony or ritual joining of the boy and girl or of their families. The ritual attitude of Mbuti and villagers toward death again is totally different.

But in the lack of ceremony the villagers once again see a chance for acting as intermediaries, as though this made them indispensable. The Mbuti are continually being subjected to one or another ritual ceremony at the hands of the villagers, even when the affair is entirely domestic and apparently does not in any way directly concern the villagers.

According to the notion of hereditary ownership, of course, the villagers also have a responsibility, and by virtually assimilating or, better, adopting the Mbuti into the villager tribe they are obliged to adopt them also into the religious system. The parallel kinship system, while never opening the way to complete integration, nonetheless demands an extension of the parallelism in all directions. The villagers have no qualms about this, and it is certainly no indication of friendly intimacy, for in this way they hope to secure the inferior status of the Mbuti not only in the present but also in the afterlife. At the same time the villagers believe they have found another source of control over their wayward servants.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

ties to villagers, and villager supernatural sanctions enforce fulfillment.

From the Mbuti point of view, however, the whole *nkumbi* is *mbafu* (stupid) and *bulé* (empty), and so are the sanctions. The initiates and their "fathers" who attend them during the ceremony take every opportunity to mock the procedure (Turnbull, 1957[2]), and as stated earlier the *nkumbi* in no way alters the status of the initiates back in their forest world, where they are still regarded as children. In all the *nkumbi* that I have witnessed in different parts of the forest, among different tribes, with varying proportions of Mbuti/Villager initiates, and under divers degrees of severity of village control, I have not seen one indication of genuine respect or belief on the part of the Mbuti, and not one instance of the initiation having the slightest structural relationship to the Mbuti forest world.

Yet by undergoing the *nkumbi* the Mbuti place themselves in a position of ritual inferiority and subordination to the villagers. They do not have any ritual specialists of their own to perform the *nkumbi*, so are wholly dependent upon the village doctors. As the *nkumbi* only perpetuates the status differential, it gives the Mbuti knowledge of tribal lore but does not grant them access to mastery of the lore. Not being full kin, but only adopted, parallel kin, the Mbuti can never qualify as ritual specialists, and are therefore at once forced by the *nkumbi* into participation in innumerable other tribal rituals, and at the same time denied any measure of ritual control and placed in a position of still greater dependence upon the villagers.

Once again the villagers cannot conceive of life without the necessary ritual observations, and in a sense they feel an obligation to provide these services for the Mbuti, but the Mbuti avoids actual dependence by adopting only the outer form of the institution, not the system. Insofar as we are discussing the village world, however, from the villager's point of view the *nkumbi* places the Mbuti in the greatest possible condition of dependence by creating an obligation to take part in a ritual life in which he will need village ritual specialists. It also provides the villagers with the surest method of control, through supernatural sanctions. The villagers have such belief in these sanctions that they are content to allow the Mbuti to get away with much trickery, convinced that sooner or later the score will be evened and restitution made.

Having drawn the Mbuti into the world of the village supernatural, because it *is* of the village, the villagers feel they have established ultimate if not immediate control.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

ultimate if not immediate control. It is more difficult to see what the Mbuti get out of it, except for certain economic advantages which are meant to be reciprocal. Looking at it briefly from the Mbuti point of view, however, we see that the advantages are perhaps more real than those accruing to the villagers. For the villagers are bound by their own sanctions, and therefore the Mbuti can make demands of his *karé* with reasonable assurance that they will be met. Also, he can now expect a succession of relatively lavish ceremonies to be prepared for him as he goes through life, at the expense of his *karé* and *kpara*. The feasting involved may seem a trivial gain for the Mbuti, but in fact it is one of their major sources of entertainment and relaxation. The *nkumbi* extends the Mbuti's economic and political horizons just as it does those of the villagers, and the Mbuti know how to reap the advantages, just as they know how to avoid most of the disadvantages. This avoidance in fact forms one of the important features of the over-all structure of their society.

One final advantage that should be mentioned, though its importance is perhaps more personal than social, is that only by participation in the *nkumbi*, or its equivalent among tribes with other forms of initiation into manhood, can the Mbuti become a man in the eyes of the villagers. There is a strongly paternalistic attitude held by villagers toward their Mbuti that is resented by the hunters, who consider themselves more manly than the villagers. The *nkumbi* at least offers them an opportunity for proving their manliness to the villagers, and it sometimes develops into a contest between the Mbuti and the village initiates. And only by participation in the *nkumbi* can the Mbuti acquire the right to be addressed as adults, admitted to the adult *baraza*, and accorded other adult privileges when in the village.

ELIMA

The villagers do not attempt to exert supernatural control through the women, as they do through the men. While the Mbuti men have nothing comparable to the *nkumbi* initiation of the villagers, the Mbuti women, in the forest world, do have a recognizable and formal way of acknowledging the puberty of a girl. They give it the same name as the villagers (the Bira call it *elima*, the Lesé *peipa*) and in its outer form it appears roughly similar; the occasion at least is the same,

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Because of the rarity of ritual performances there is one which should be mentioned here, though it seems unique and known only to net-hunters as far as I could ascertain. The ritual involves the building of a fire, with much greater care and concern than the hunting fire or the *molimo* fire, and it is believed specifically that the correct performance of this ritual will lead the Mbuti to honey and/or bring the bees, and their honey, closer to the Mbuti. A full description is given in the section on religion and magic (pp. 231–33). Here it need only be said that the preparations, including the digging of small trenches for water and the use of special woods and leaves, are designed to give the maximum amount of smoke. The lighting of the fire is accompanied by blowing on the *madé*[4] (efe: *segbe*) whistles, through which water is first poured.

All being taken into consideration, the relative lack of magic or ritual associated with food quest, the lack of interest shown in certain readily available forms of food supply such as fish, and the lack of food taboos all confirm the abundance of forest foods and the adequacy of Mbuti technology. This is important in considering the over-all economic system.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF TERRITORY

While the environment does not, through areas of shortage or abundance, determine the location of hunting bands, it does provide natural boundaries which form convenient borders between each hunting band. The total territory is more than ample for the total population, and the even distribution of game and vegetable foods means that there are no preferential areas that might make for rivalry between one band and the next. There is, in any case, a safety factor in that the bands are arranged side by side, in several vast circles, in the center of each of which the boundaries are so loosely drawn that there is effectively a no-man's-land, in which anyone may hunt and where bands occasionally, though rarely, may come in contact with each other.

The only territory to be considered, then, is that of the individual hunting band. This is again, in all cases except possibly the area

[4] The *madé* is a conical pipe, open at both ends, made of two hollowed-out cross-sections cut lengthwise, bound together either by *nkusa* twine or by strips of vine. The pouring of water, which is comparable to the pouring of water through the *molimo* trumpet (see Chapter 14) may have ritual significance, but is explained invariably and unhesitatingly as being necessary simply to get a better sound. It swells the wood and binds the sections closer to each other.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

THE LESSER *MOLIMO* (*molimo madé*)

224 Apart from death there are two major crisis areas over which the Mbuti may have little or no effective control, poor hunting and sickness. But they do have a certain amount of control, and it is frequently effective. Poor hunting is more often than not remedied simply by hunting elsewhere, and it is rare that a band goes hungry 752 for any reason except laziness. Against sickness the Mbuti have many 757 remedies that are plainly effective. In particular they know how to clean open wounds and prevent infection, they know how to set and mend broken limbs, they know how to reduce fevers, and they know how to alleviate minor ailments such as headache, toothache and mild stomach disorders. They also have effective remedies against snakebite. So in case of sickness they either cure the patient, or else the patient becomes well of his own accord, or else he dies, the latter event leading to the greater *molimo*.

778 In such crises, then, time alone usually provides a solution, and the [224] Mbuti are accustomed to waiting for these situations to improve. If [75] bad hunting persists, however, or sickness shows no sign of alleviation, then it becomes a matter "of the forest." There is no rite or 778 ceremony, but in the evenings the men gather around a central fire 796 and sing *molimo* songs, thereby attracting the attention of the forest 533 to their plight. The songs do not convey any specific request from the [782] Mbuti for the betterment of their condition, it being considered necessary only to awaken the forest, for then it is for the forest to act as it will. Being benevolent, like a parent, whatever it does is accepted as being good, though it may not be understood.

796 Normally a lesser *molimo* lasts for only a few days, for during that time there is likely to be a change in the situation that is taken as an indication that the forest has awakened. The evening songs are not [533] accompanied by any of the preliminaries that mark the greater *molimo*, [535] nor are the women and children quite so rigorously excluded, and [765] there is not the same order of dancing, which in the greater *molimo* is of the utmost importance. In the lesser *molimo* the dancing will be done by youths only, and be casual and mildly erotic. Above all there will be no use made of the *molimo* trumpet.

All adults youths and men are expected to take part, and although [626] there will be criticism if someone does not attend, there will not be the same violent reaction that there is against such offenders in the greater molimo.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

greater *molimo*. In the case of a hunting *molimo*, the initiative is taken by the younger hunters, who sit together around a fire and simply begin singing. In the case of sickness, the initiative is taken by the adult men of the family concerned if the sick person is a child, and if the sick person is an adult the *molimo* will be initiated by his or her male age mates.

The hunting inevitably gets better sooner or later, and the lesser *molimo*, once begun, will continue until it does. But sickness may develop into death, in which case there will be an immediate change of camp, following an uncomplicated and informal burial, and the commencement of the greater *molimo*.

THE GREATER *MOLIMO* (*molimo mangbo*)

In a previous account (Turnbull, 1960, pp. 307–340), the general procedure of the greater *molimo* was outlined, and it was indicated that there is no set rule as to when a greater *molimo* should be held. Certainly it is not held for every death within the band, not even for every adult death. It may, on the other hand, be held for a child. It is largely a question of *roho*, and this is determined by a number of considerations such as the nature of the death, the importance of the deceased to the band, and the general tenor of life in the band at that moment, particularly the condition of hunting. A combination of poor hunting and ill humor and general sickness, associated with the death of a child, even of a stranger child temporarily within the band, may well occasion a *molimo*, for the total combination indicates that the forest is "sleeping" (*é langé toro*). On the other hand, the death of a great hunter, through his own fault or through sickness but at a time of good hunting and general contentment, may pass unmarked except by the usual summary burial and change of camp, all expression of grief being confined to the immediate family concerned.

One other consideration not without importance is the fact that whoever initiates a *molimo* festival undertakes a responsibility that may become a burden. He has to see that everyone cooperates in providing food, and when, as sometimes happens, the response is meager, he has somehow to provide enough himself for the society's evening repast. As a greater *molimo* is not likely to last under a month, except possibly for a child under circumstances which otherwise become quickly improved, the economic burden is one to cause careful consideration.

224 away he stabs him, and every time the elephant turns he stands still. The elephant can run faster than a man, and the pygmy's only hope is to wound the animal so badly that it will be unable to catch him before he gets away.

Finally the elephant goes charging off with one or more wounds in his intestines. The hunter, with his spear in his hand, returns to the camp. Perhaps the other men will be there, but they may be out net hunting. In the latter case he waits until they have all assembled, and as soon as they are together he tells them his story. There is much excitement; men, women, and children crowd around him and inspect the spear. They may say, "Hmmm, only that much of the tip is bloody, probably he won't die. Let it go." But if the spear is bloody way down to such and such a point, then the elephant has a serious wound and they will follow him.

[484] In the latter case the whole camp goes together. The women load on their babies and cooking pots, and their bunches of plantains. The men take their weapons, and they leave only an old man or two to watch the camp while they are away. They will follow the elephant two or three days, until he finally lies down and dies of peritonitis. Sometimes he has been dead for some time when they reach him, and he may be blown up like a balloon and rotten. Still they will eat him, for rotten meat, if thoroughly boiled, is edible.

224 • 796 When a group of pygmies reaches a blown-up elephant, a special ceremony takes place. A man other than the elephant hunter cuts a square of skin off the elephant's side. He cuts this up and puts pieces into the mouths of everyone. Then he cuts another layer, and passes this around, and another layer, until he comes down to a point where the body wall is very thin, and

224 796 everyone has had a taste of the raw skin.

Then a small male child, squalling and screaming, is thrust on the elephant's side; he is told to bite, which he does, and the balloon bursts.

This ceremony is repugnant to the pygmies, as they do not like raw meat; it is especially repugnant to the child, who does not enjoy having the whole rotten insides of the elephant burst in his face.

[611] The child is the youngest son of the man who killed the elephant. If the man has no suitable son, it may be his nephew; or, if he has several young sons and the youngest is too small, either to understand the order or to bite, it will be the next older son.

224 Now that the elephant has burst, the ceremony is over, and a free-for-all takes place; the men cut the sides open, pull out the entrails, and climb inside to hack away at the meat. Other men rush to the head and chop away the tusks. The women take the pieces of meat which their men hand to them, and boil them. As soon as they have cooked one chunk, they will start to [251] boil another. Everyone eats as much of the boiled meat as he is able, and they spread out the rest on drying racks; when it has dried they will take it into the village to the Negroes, who keep it and eat it gradually, for the combination of boiling and drying serves as a means of preserving it, the only food preservation the pygmies practice, and then not for themselves. The tusks go to the special patron of the elephant hunter, and the patron sells them to the Greek or Hindu trader; the patron gives the pygmy a small share of what he receives.

Division of meat.—The need of giving some of the meat to their Negro hosts, and the knowledge that no one will starve as long as they can get bananas, makes the problem of meat di-